

By contrast, Golding wants to increase the size of San Diego's police force without levying new taxes or fees. Under her proposal, part or all of the city's annual increase in property tax revenues would be earmarked for new officers. Preliminary estimates place next year's increase in property tax revenues at \$6.5 million.

Union-Tribune

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Publisher, 1929-1936

COL. IRA C. COBLEY

Publisher, 1936-1947

AMISS S. COBLEY

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The King of the

Approve the st

San Diego should not risk

Does San Diego want to risk losing the Chargers to Los Angeles or some other sports-starved city eager to pay big bucks to attract the economic bonanza of a National Football League team?

That's the question the City Council should ponder today as it considers whether to approve a \$66 million bond issue aimed at keeping the Chargers in San Diego until 2020.

The bond measure would finance a major expansion of Jack Murphy Stadium, from 60,826 to 70,890 seats, and build a new team practice facility in nearby Murphy Canyon. In exchange for the improvements, the Chargers would stay in San Diego for another 25 years, under a lease

extension approved by the City Council and the defending AFC champions last year.

Sound like a good deal for San Diego? It is.

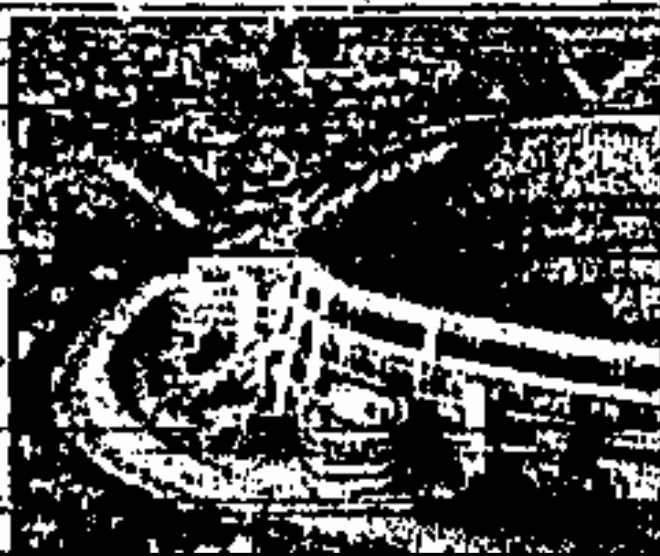
Especially at a moment when a half-dozen NFL franchises are entertaining lucrative offers to relocate. And especially when you consider what three other cities recently pledged to spend in order to woo teams away from their hometowns.

St. Louis, for example, is spending \$350 million on a new domed stadium and other enhancements to lure the Rams from Anaheim. Baltimore has committed \$200 million for a new 70,000-seat stadium to get the Browns to leave Cleveland. Oakland will spend \$187 million on expansion of its coliseum and other amenities in moving the Raiders from Los Angeles.

Significantly, the San Diego project would be paid for without a tax increase. Instead, it would be financed by lease revenue bonds supported by a

The bond measure would finance a major expansion of Jack Murphy Stadium, from 60,826 to 70,890 seats, and build a new team practice facility in nearby Murphy Canyon. In exchange for the improvements, the Chargers would stay in San Diego for another 25

years, under a lease extension approved by the City Council and the defending AFC champions last year.



REPORT

MARQUETTE
UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL

The following is the full text of the National Sports Law Institute's analysis of the city of San Diego's controversial \$78 million stadium-expansion contract with the Chargers.

Founded in 1989 to study sports, business and ethics, the institute is an arm of the Marquette University Law School in Milwaukee.

According to institute Director Martin J.

The actual triggering event for this renegotiation to occur is unclear. Initially, an NFL team cannot literally exceed its salary cap amount. Although reports show that many teams often do so, this does not mean that the NFL allows this to happen or that the NFL is conscious of such efforts. In fact, most teams attempt to keep within the cap on a yearly basis. It is the salary cap of the following or future years which is then exceeded.

Furthermore, it is hard to understand why the Chargers should be given a break for such a triggering event. It is their expenditure of money (and indirectly through the NFL) that would cause such an event to occur. The city seems to be giving them an undeserved out at this point.

5) More Favored Terms

term of the agreement. This is a reflection of the climate in professional sports today where so many teams threaten or attempt to relocate.

6) There are also no clear escape clauses which allow the team a way out of the lease at certain times. Although the NFL leases studied here do not have good examples of such a provision this is becoming a common way to allow both parties out of an agreement that may turn out to be economically unfeasible in the future.

7) Validity of present work on Improvements

As the city has already begun work on the \$60 million in improvements, it is important to analyze whether this work is jeopardized by the repeal of the additional \$18 million in

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St. Louis Cardinals will contain strong provisions of this nature. These provisions provide for very high penalties to induce a team to stay during the

4

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Editor of the Editorial Page

"The Ring of Truth"

A good deal 1/22/97

City will reap benefits from

San Diegans have a simple choice: Do you want the Chargers here or not? The price of keeping a professional sports team in your town these days is upgrading publicly owned stadiums to the standards of other cities' facilities.

Some people think that price is too high. If so, they must be willing to let their sports franchises move elsewhere, which is very possible with the intense competition between cities to attract teams. That's the decision facing those who oppose the expansion of Jack Murphy Stadium.

San Diegans have heard a lot of angry voices over the stadium recently. But what they haven't heard is that the expansion is a good deal.

Consider what other cities paid to lure away NFL franchises. St. Louis spent \$350 million to build a new stadium, including \$70 million in private money to pay off the Rams' lease at Anaheim Stadium. Oakland is spending \$187 million to expand the Coliseum, and the Raiders get all revenue from ticket sales and luxury suites, plus \$50 million in relocation fees to move from Los Angeles. Baltimore is spending \$200 million for a new stadium, and the Ravens, formerly the Cleveland Browns, also get \$80 million in personal seat licenses and relocation expenses.

In return, the Raiders pay Oakland \$500,000 a year in rent, the Rams pay \$250,000 to St. Louis and the Ravens pay Baltimore — zippo.

Now, look at the San Diego deal: \$87 million in expansion costs financed by bonds paid for by stadium revenues. The city didn't give the Chargers any signing bonus or fees like other cities did, although the team wanted \$10 million. Instead, the city guaranteed



Susan Golding

A few years from now, when the stadium is complete, the 60,000 seats are filled and the city is making millions on the deal, today's brouhaha will be a dim memory. San Diegans will just be glad they didn't chase the Chargers out of town by forcing the city to renege on a good deal.

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Voter dissatisfaction with city government' has reached dismal proportions. Confidence in the mayor and City Council has ebbed ominously. The spiraling costs of the Chargers' ticket guarantee, coupled with the Padres' decision to suspend construction on the downtown ballpark, have become painful symbols of municipal ineptitude.



While Roberts is known for

twisting arms when necessary, Murphy has a soft-spoken, unassuming air and a judicial manner. He is regarded almost universally as a thoughtful intellect and a good listener. Where Roberts is prone to charging off toward a solution of his own, such as his failed campaign to build a binational airport at the border, Murphy is a patient consensus builder.

2/25/01 Uni

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EDITORIALS

Stalled

Mayor devises a

In a significant break for San Diego's long downtown ballpark, Dick Murphy has devised a new financing plan, more realistic, more reliable, more fiscally prudent than the original.

Murphy's proposal, which would save taxpayers about \$120 million over the 30-year life of the construction bonds, ought to dispel any doubts about the city's ability to pay for its \$225 million share of the \$453 million project.

As a result, the revised financing formula should inject a strong dose of confidence in the City Council, which is scheduled to recast a critical series of votes on the Padres ballpark March 6. Council members, especially the four newly elected ones — Scott Peters, Brian Maienschein, Toni Atkins, Jim Madaffer — should scrutinize the mayor's plan carefully. If they do, they will find it merits their support, as does the voter-approved ballpark initiative, which is the catalyst for a historic \$1 billion redevelopment of downtown.

The original financing schedule, worked out nearly three years ago, relied on the creation of hundreds of additional hotel rooms downtown to provide the tax revenues needed to pay off the city's construction bonds. But many of those hotel rooms have not yet materialized. In particular, the proposed convention headquarters hotel at the old Campbell Shipyard.

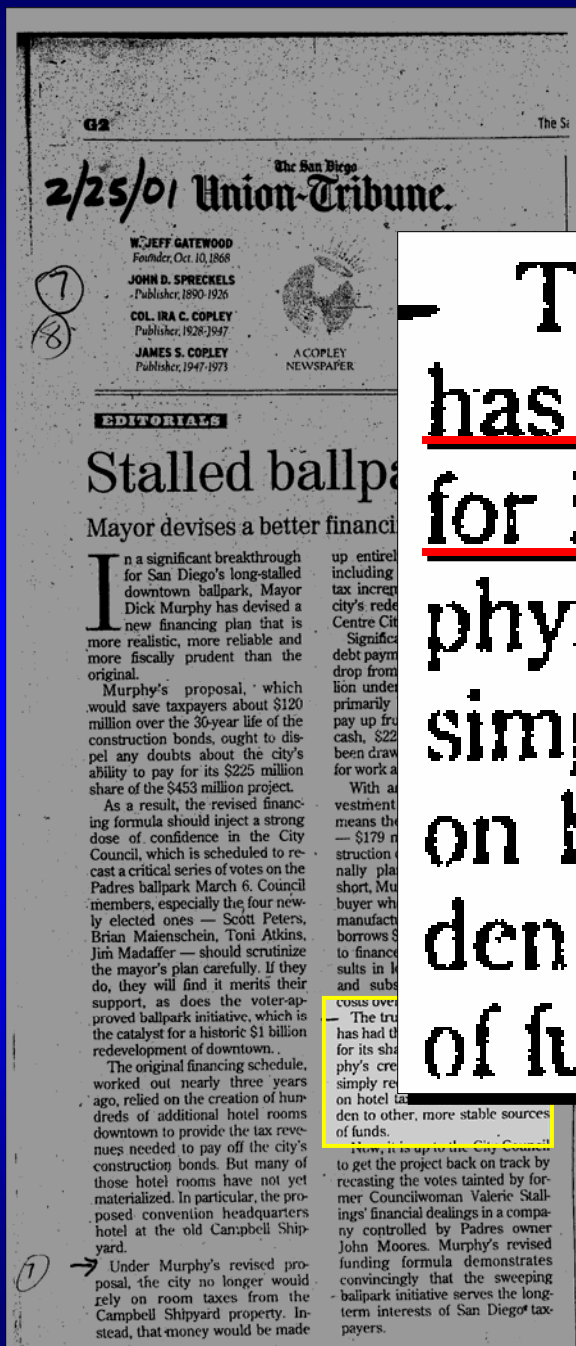
Under Murphy's revised proposal, the city no longer would rely on room taxes from the Campbell Shipyard property. Instead, that money would be made

Under Murphy's revised proposal, the city no longer would rely on room taxes from the Campbell Shipyard property. Instead, that money would be made

primarily because the city would pay up front nearly \$30 million in cash, \$22 million of which has

up entirely from other sources, including higher-than-projected tax increments generated by the city's redevelopment agency, the Centre City Development Corp.

payors.



The truth is that the city always has had the fiscal resources to pay for its share of the ballpark. Murphy's creative financing strategy simply reduces the city's reliance on hotel taxes and shifts the burden to other, more stable sources of funds.

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EDITORIAL

Decision time

Council should vote ballpark back on track

This week will pose the first real test for Mayor Dick Murphy and the new City Council, as the \$1 billion ballpark redevelopment initiative comes up for a critical round of votes.

At stake is the future of downtown San Diego—and the promising vision of a revitalized urban core stretching from Balboa Park to the bay, anchored by a gleaming professional sports venue, a new main library and an expanded convention center.

Murphy and five members of the present seven-member City Council were not in office when the Padres ballpark was approved by nearly 60 percent of voters and implemented by a string of unanimous council votes. The current council's newest member, Ralph Inzunza, was elected only last week. Encouragingly for downtown, he is a strong advocate of the sweeping redevelopment plan.

Over the last month, the council's four other newcomers—Toni Atkins, Jim Madaffer, Brian Maisenschein and Scott Peters—have had a chance to review the half-finished project and Mayor Murphy's revised financing proposal in detail. On Tuesday, the council will reconsider several earlier actions that must be revoked in order to lift the legal taint created by former Councilwoman Valerie Stallings' financial dealings.

At the heart of the council's deliberations is the question of whether there are sufficient assurances that both the Padres and the city can deliver on their commit-

ments to rebuild a 26-block swath of the East Village. The answer is a resounding yes. In fact, Murphy's reworked financing plan has only strengthened the project. It should instill a strong sense of confidence in the council that moving forward on the ballpark serves San Diego's long-term interests.

Under the mayor's formula, taxpayers would save an estimated \$120 million in interest costs over the 30-year term of the city's construction bonds, compared to the original plan. That's prime would make of \$30 million its \$225 million ball fusion of \$1



million. Accordingly, annual interest payments on the bonds would drop from \$21 million to \$16 million, and the city no longer would have to rely on room taxes from an as-yet-unbuilt hotel at the old Campbell Shipyard site to help pay off the bonds.

This week's deliberations offer an opportunity for San Diego's new and largely untested City Council to break the civic deadlock on the ballpark and move ahead decisively. If council members grasp this historic chance, they will deserve the gratitude of future generations, just as San Diegans today pay tribute to previous leaders who created such monuments as Balboa Park and Horton Plaza.

Under the mayor's formula, tax-
payers would save an estimated
\$120 million in interest costs over

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EDITORIAL

A better deal

City Council should back ballpark plan

Mayor Dick Murphy's new ballpark financing plan is a good deal for taxpayers and an even

better deal for the economic future of downtown San Diego, which would flourish under the redevelopment

plan. The City Council should support the plan. Consider financing the city's annual payments for the Padres' stadium. The plan would drop the city's annual payments for the Padres' stadium from \$10 million to \$5 million.

Moreover, Mayor Bruce L. Allyn's appeals of the ruling by the state supreme court that the city must pay the Padres' stadium debt will do a year, assume the same as the city's annual payments for the Padres' stadium.

Mayor N. debt payments into the city's general fund, reducing the \$170 million would contribute to the city's development fund, reduce the city's annual payments for the Padres' stadium.

The CCDC is able to contribute more cash to the pot because the tax revenues it is receiving from downtown redevelopment are soaring due to the ballpark initiative. That is exactly how it is supposed to work. The ballpark, costing a total of \$452.5 million, serves as a catalyst for a much broader, \$1 billion development plan that includes new hotels, office towers, retail ven-

tures and housing. In the process, the city's tax receipts surge.

Were it not for the chronic litigation filed by Henderson in his failed bid to block the ballpark after it was approved by nearly 60 percent of San Diego voters, the costs to taxpayers would be significantly less.

Mayor Dick Murphy's new ballpark financing plan is a good deal for taxpayers and an even

appreciable three to five years, the city will refinance the bonds as tax-exempt instruments and cut its debt payments substantially.

Next week the City Council will vote whether to move forward on the bond sale. Despite Henderson's obstructionist tactics, Murphy's financing plan is decidedly taxpayer-friendly. It merits council members' support.

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EDITORIALS

Decisive vote

A chance for a thriving downtown, ballpark

San Diego's new, relatively untested mayor and City Council will face their most important tomorrow: a bond issue for the ballpark. The question San Diego's elected leaders face is the vision of a revitalized town, just as a previous generation of civic leaders did ahead with Horton Plaza.

This vote is not an endorsement on a \$452.5 million for the Padres. It is only the centerpiece of an \$1 billion redevelopment project, the largest in San Diego's history. The entire eastern half of downtown would gain from the hotels, office towers, and housing that the project would bring.

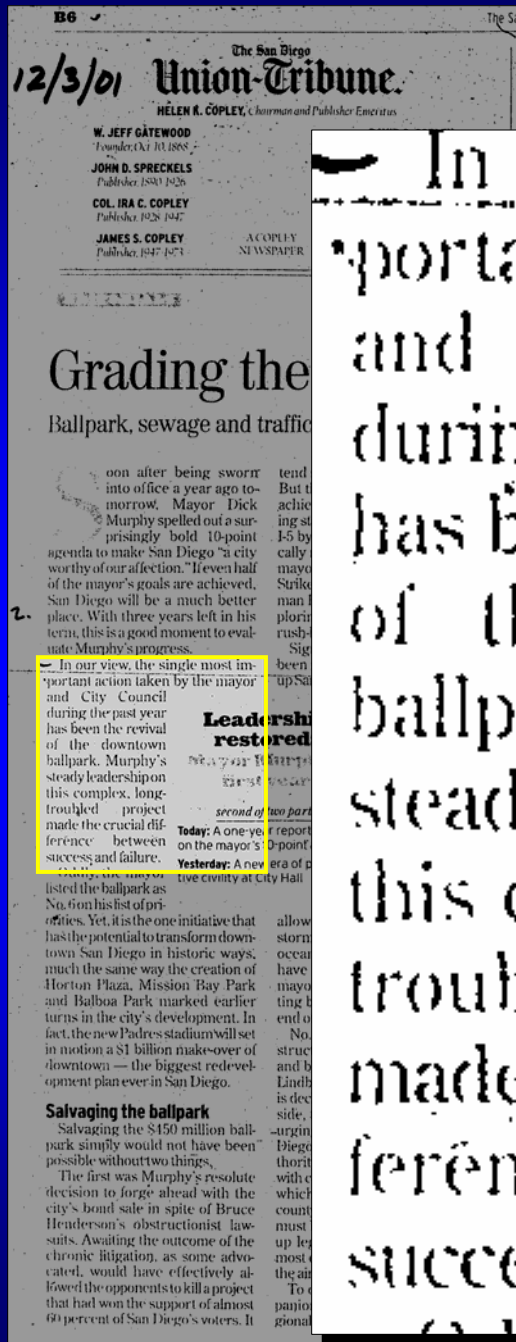
The revised financing plan bears little resemblance to that approved by voters in 1998, and stirs significant worries about whether, and how soon, the ancillary redevelopment will be built. The Padres maintain they will comply with the original deal. We take them at their word.

If council members look only at the present, they will see many potential difficulties with this initiative. After all, the nation almost surely has entered a recession after the Sept. 11 terror attacks, making all sorts of new ventures problematic. And it is true, of course, that the details of the project have had to change in the face of Bruce Henderson's obstructionist lawsuits and the delays they have imposed.

But the broader question is whether the new financing plan represents a significant improvement for taxpayers and for the fiscal health of the city. There plainly is no requirement that the project be resubmitted to the voters. The revote provisions of the memorandum of understanding approved by the voters apply only in cases where the city's fiscal condition would be adversely affected.

Horton Plaza represents one of the most successful downtown redevelopment projects in any American city. Two decades ago, the City Council had the vision to recognize its potential in spite of the critics' doubts. The ballpark offers an even bigger opportunity to remake downtown San Diego. It deserves the City Council's unanimous endorsement.

Because the new financing plan represents a significant improvement for taxpayers and for the



In our view, the single most important action taken by the mayor and City Council during the past year has been the revival of the downtown ballpark. Murphy's steady leadership on this complex, long-troubled project made the crucial difference between success and failure.

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Editor of

EDITORIALS

Football gamble

Will city be thrown for a loss in a new stadium?

For taxpayers and football fans alike, the proposed renegotiation of the Chargers long-maligned contract with San Diego is like a 40-yard pass: It comes with great risk but also the potential for a big payoff.

The potential benefit is that the amended agreement would set in motion constructive talks on a new stadium, abolishing in one stroke both the widely despised ticket guarantee and the Chargers' pending lawsuit against the city. Victory for all sides would be achieved ultimately through voter approval of a new stadium.

For the city, the risk of a disastrous interception lies in agreeing to release the team from the last 12 years of its 25-year lease.

The Chargers' staying in San Diego through 2020 was the central condition upon which taxpayers invested \$78 million to upgrade Qualcomm Stadium in 1997. In a significant concession, the City Council now proposes to allow the team to leave town at the end of the 2008 season if voters fail to approve a new stadium.

In addition, the term sheet devised by the council in closed session permits the Chargers to start shopping the team to other cities at the end of the 2006 National Football League season. This raises the disturbing possibility of a bidding contest erupting between San Diego and other venues in the months before voters would go to the polls in November 2008 to consider a stadium measure.

If a stadium deal does not materialize — and the term sheet stipulates "neither Party shall be oblig-

ated to participate in a stadium proposal" — fans would be left in limbo after the 2008 season. If the Chargers' side, if the team is not to be obligated to pay bonds on the pension, or approximately \$24 million in 2010, they would be smaller terminations every year the team stays in San Diego.

One irony of the situation is that the elimination of the ticket guarantee is a double-edged sword. It would eliminate the city's obligation to guarantee the team's ticket sales, but it would also eliminate the city's right to force the team to play in San Diego.

The Chargers' blackout rules, which allow the team to cancel games if the city is not guaranteed a certain number of seats, are a major liability for the city. The Chargers' request for a flat rent of \$2 million with no offset for the rent payment in 2014 in the team continues to be a major liability for the city.

The amendment to the City Council are for San Diego. But existing contract, both the city and promptly begin to faith, with the mutual serving the Chargers institution come. Achieving may well require a throw.

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EDITORIALS

Chargers' lease

Approve agreement, debate team's future

The amended lease between the city and the Chargers for use of Qualcomm Stadium deserves swift approval tomorrow by a solid majority of the San Diego City Council. It is a much-improved deal for taxpayers. And it would set the stage for

the next round of talks to determine the future of professional football in San Diego.

For the city, the best news in the new lease is that it would finally abolish the odious provision for taxpayer-subsidized "sellouts" of home games at Qualcomm. The hated ticket guarantee has cost the city \$36.4 million since 1997.

For the Chargers, the team would rid itself of the public relations nightmare that was the ticket guarantee, as well as eliminate the "trigger clause" that made the team's ability to leave town for greener pastures problematic. Under the new lease, the team could leave after the 2008 season, but only if it paid off as much as \$57.5 million in outstanding stadium bonds.

In addition, the Chargers would drop the team's lawsuit against the city, which was a gamble for both sides.

Those provisions alone ought to be enough to merit councilmembers' favor. But approval of the new lease would hardly settle the question of the team's long-term future here. And what comes next would likely make the last year of city-Chargers' scrums seem like the proverbial Sunday afternoon walk in the park.

A new stadium. That's what the Chargers say they want, and need, to stay here. And that's the bottom line of the next round of talks.

Team officials want negotiations to begin as soon as possible after tomorrow's City Council vote. Mayor Dick Murphy would like a little more time, perhaps to Sep-

tember or October for a bit of a breather. But with what he right city's No. 1 priority lion hole in its pen-

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The eno to a pug prob be a end. T dow

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And, finally, can Bruce Henderson be detained at Guantánamo until all this is over?

Let the talks begin, sooner rather later.



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tember or October—for a bit of a break with the Chargers, and time for the city to decide with what he rightly calls its No. 1 priority, a lion hole in its pension plan.

But the city ought to chew on pension before football at the same time. There is little time to relax for the amended lease than a year; no clear should think that new stadium will be there is to be a stadium the ballot in November.

There is enough to make a campaign proposal be finished. The downtown front stadium as expanded Convention near Petco Park was a bit unrealistic. Now the strict commissioner missed it out of hand, and it's back to Qualcomm.

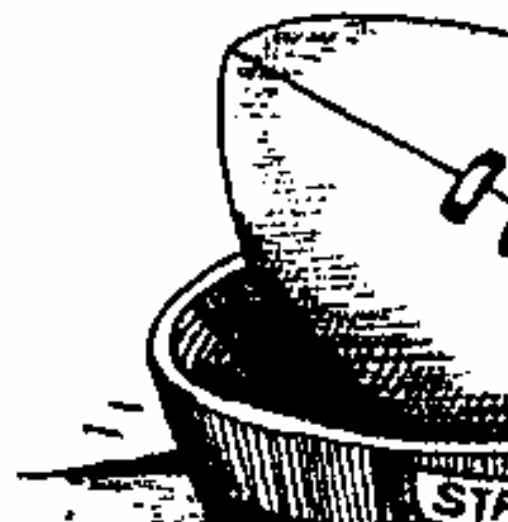
The issues are many. To begin with, do we care enough about professional football here?

If the answer to these questions is yes, then there are these: Can we legally declare a bit of the state's requirement come a redevelopment? Does the city really own 60 of the Q's 160 acres? Should we keep the land and develop it? In either case, the income from the stadium really pay for a stadium? Would the revenues pay for the \$175 million in necessary public improvements?

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EDITORIALS

Re-elect Murphy

Methodical mayor can best fix

To say that San Diegans on Nov. 2 will be deciding the most important election for mayor in decades would be a gross understatement. Never has the city faced such a dark and troubled financial morass, and it will demand full attention and decisive action from the next mayor.

The litany of financial troubles at City Hall is long and serious: a \$1.7 billion deficit in the pension fund and the employees' health care system; the city's credit ratings downgraded and, in the case of one rating agency, suspended entirely; investigations into possible financial irregularities under way by the FBI, the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

For a city that has long taken justifiable pride in its conservative finances — The late tax crusader Howard Jarvis was fond of saying that if all California cities were run as well as San Diego there would have been no need for Proposition 13 — this is all very new and disturbing.

It is against this backdrop that voters must decide whether incumbent Mayor Dick Murphy deserves another four years as San Diego's political leader. If they decide not, their choices are county Supervisor Ron Roberts or Councilwoman Donna Frye, a write-in candidate.

The obvious key questions for San Diegans are these: To what degree is Murphy responsible for the problems? And, could Roberts or Frye do better?

Over the past 12 months, as the city sank deeper into financial peril, this editorial page has not been shy about criticizing Murphy and pointing out where we think he, the City Council, city manager and others have failed to recognize the severity of the problems and to demonstrate the leadership to solve them.

But the genesis of the financial problems predated Murphy at City Hall. And, despite our disap-

pointments growing peril is best suited job ahead.

ELECTION
2004
ENDORSEMENT

We like it now. We have watched the lim cut through the trouble involving the downtown ballpark and the Chargers' bid to ante.

Those are significant plishments.

Looking ahead, and most important, we believe he will manage the pension fund crisis his top priority and that he has the best temperament to work with the council, manager and employee groups to restore fiscal health.

Roberts is a dedicated servant and has an excellent grasp of the pension fund problem on the panoply of issues, but the need for a new city manager, we have too many questions with him.

Frye is a fresh face with a strong appeal. But her close ties to the unionized labor would, in our view, preclude her from challenging the powerful public employee unions in the pension fund battles ahead.

We recognize Murphy's limitations as a leader. But we believe his methodical perseverance is the best quality for the next mayor of San Diego.

quires, it has the potential to transform downtown San Diego in historic ways, much the same way the creation of Horton Plaza, Mission Bay Park and Balboa Park marked earlier turns in the city's development. In fact, the new Padres stadium will set in motion a \$1 billion make-over of downtown — the biggest redevelopment plan ever in San Diego.

Salvaging the ballpark

Salvaging the \$450 million ballpark simply would not have been possible without two things.

The first was Murphy's resolute decision to forge ahead with the city's bond sale in spite of Bruce Henderson's obstructionist lawsuits. Awaiting the outcome of the chronic litigation, as some advocated, would have effectively al-

lowed raw sewage to seep into storm drains and then flow into the ocean or bays. Much more will have to be done, however, if the mayor is to reach his target of cutting beach closures in half by the end of his term.

No. 5 on the mayor's agenda is restructuring regional government and building an airport to replace Lindbergh Field. The picture here is decidedly mixed. On the positive side, the Legislature at Murphy's urging has established the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority. The new panel is charged with coming up with an airport plan which will be submitted to voters countywide. Although the authority must be revamped through follow-up legislation next year, it is the most encouraging development on the airport front in years.

But the genesis of the financial problems predated Murphy at City Hall. And, despite our disap-

pointments in his response to the growing peril, we believe Murphy is best suited to tackle the tough job ahead.

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EDITORIALS

Re-elect Murphy

Methodical mayor can best fix city's woes

To say that San Diegans on Nov. 2 will be deciding the most important election for mayor in decades would be a gross understatement. Never has the city faced such a dark and troubled financial morass, and it will demand full attention and decisive action from the next mayor.

The litany of financial troubles at City Hall is long and serious: a \$1.7 billion deficit in the pension fund and the employees' health care system; the city's credit ratings downgraded and, in the case of one rating agency, suspended entirely; investigations into possible financial irregularities under way by the FBI, the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

For a city that has long taken justifiable pride in its conservative finances — The late tax crusader Howard Jarvis was fond of saying that if all California cities were run as well as San Diego there would have been no need for Proposition 13 — this is all very new and disturbing.

It is against this backdrop that voters must decide whether incumbent Mayor Dick Murphy deserves another four years as San Diego's political leader. If they decide not, their choices are county Supervisor Ron Roberts or Councilwoman Donna Frye, a write-in candidate.

The obvious key questions for San Diegans are these: To what degree is Murphy responsible for the problems? And, could Roberts or Frye do better?

Over the past 12 months, as the city sank deeper into financial peril, this editorial page has not been shy about criticizing Murphy and pointing out where we think he, the City Council, city manager and others have failed to recognize the severity of the problems and to demonstrate the leadership to solve them.

But the genesis of the financial problems predated Murphy at City Hall. And, despite our disap-

pointments in his response to the growing peril, we believe Murphy is best suited to tackle the tough job ahead.

In reality, it is not all that difficult to see what needs to be done at City Hall. Annual full funding of the pension system must be restored and the mountain of debt paid off. Unfortunately, employee pension benefits must be cut. And the public must be told the truth every step of the way.

Easily said; not so easily done.

We have come to know Murphy well since the campaign of

2004

ENDORSEMENT

We believe that Murphy is the best person to lead the city through this difficult time. He has a proven track record of leadership and has the ability to make the tough decisions that will be required to get the city back on a sound financial footing. We urge all San Diegans to vote for Dick Murphy on Nov. 2.

quires, real estate and urban planning has the potential to transform downtown San Diego in historic ways, much the same way the creation of Horton Plaza, Mission Bay Park and Balboa Park marked earlier turns in the city's development. In fact, the new Padres stadium will set in motion a \$1 billion make-over of downtown — the biggest redevelopment plan ever in San Diego.

Salvaging the ballpark

Salvaging the \$450 million ballpark simply would not have been possible without two things.

The first was Murphy's resolute decision to forge ahead with the city's bond sale in spite of Bruce Henderson's obstructionist lawsuits. Awaiting the outcome of the chronic litigation, as some advocated, would have effectively allowed the opponents to kill a project that had won the support of almost 60 percent of San Diego's voters. It was long past time for someone at City Hall to stand up to Henderson and his small clutch of lawsuit-happy antagonists, who have sought to block every major city initiative in recent years. Our hope is that Murphy will continue to aggressively defend the city's interests against these litigious adversaries.

The second factor that got the ballpark back on track, gaining a solid 8-1 endorsement from the council, was the mayor's revised financing plan. By putting more cash into the ballpark up front, Murphy slashed the city's annual interest

allow raw sewage to seep into storm drains and then flow into the ocean or bays. Much more will have to be done, however, if the mayor is to reach his target of cutting beach closures in half by the end of his term.

No. 5 on the mayor's agenda is restructuring regional government and building an airport to replace Lindbergh Field. The picture here is decidedly mixed. On the positive side, the Legislature at Murphy's urging has established the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority. The new panel is charged with coming up with an airport plan which will be submitted to voters countywide. Although the authority must be revamped through follow-up legislation next year, it is the most encouraging development on the airport front in years.

To our dismay, however, a companion proposal to strengthen regional decision-making was lifeless upon delivery in Sacramento. Murphy was among the San Diego elected leaders who withheld their support for the plan, assuring its early demise. But the problem of fragmented government in San Diego is only getting worse. We challenge the mayor to play a constructive role in addressing this growing concern next year.

Topping the agenda

At the top of Murphy's agenda — No. 1 — is the establishment of an Ethics Commission to police candidates and officeholders at election time. This is a commendable

Unfortunately, employee pension benefits must be cut. And the public must be told the truth every step of the way.

through the San Diego Association of Governments. Murphy has begun laying the foundation for improvements in the future.

Working with other elected leaders from around the county, the mayor recently won SANDAG approval for an accelerated \$516 million transportation construction program. Most of the funds will be used to create reversible lanes on gridlocked Interstate 15 and to ex-

provements to the branches. Goal No. 8, making San Diego America's safest city, already has benefited from the nationwide drop in crime.

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